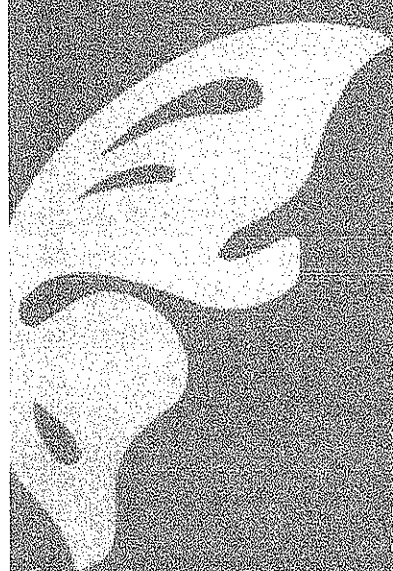




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February 29, 2008

Raised Bill No. 5447 – An Act Concerning Appointments to the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council

My name is Jeffrey Walter. I am President of Rushford Center, a comprehensive, community provider of behavioral healthcare services in central Connecticut. I also serve as Co-Chair, with Representative Sayers, of the Connecticut Behavioral Health Partnership (BHP) Oversight Council. I am here in support of Raised Bill 5447 which will transfer appointment responsibility from the Chairpersons of the Medicaid Managed Care Council to legislative leadership. This change will bring the appointments into conformity with other legislative commissions and advisory bodies.

I would request an amendment to this bill: It is important to the continuity of Council business to provide a grace period for sitting Council members to either obtain appointments from the appropriate legislative leaders or to be replaced. I would, therefore, propose a six-month grace period, following the date on which this act would take effect, October 1, 2008. I would also request two further amendments to the BHP statute.

The first is to amend the first sentence in Section 17a-22o Subsection (b) to read as follows:

(b) All proposals for initial rates, INCREASES OR reductions to existing rates and changes in rate methodology within the Behavioral Health Partnership shall be submitted to the Behavioral Health Partnership Oversight Council for review WITHIN 60 DAYS OF THE START OF EACH STATE FISCAL YEAR.

The purpose of this amendment is to allow the Council to review and act on BHP rate changes at the start of, rather than later in, the fiscal year.

The second amendment would add to the Council, as an ex officio member, the Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services, or his/her designee.

I thank you for your consideration of these amendments.

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